

parts are certainly of a purer white, without the yellowish tinge to be found in the other species.

The white margins to the inner webs of the outer tail-feathers noticeable in *X. minlosi* are wanting in *S. singularis*. On the other hand, the white apical margins to the tertiaries, well represented in the latter bird, are not to be found in *X. minlosi* or are but slightly indicated.

Thus we have now two species of *Xenerpestes*, viz. :—

1. *X. minlosi* Berl. *Hab.* Bucaramanga (Colombia).
2. *X. singularis* (Tacz. & Berl.). *Hab.* Mapoto (Ecuador).

II. METOPOTHRIX.

Having lately found in a collection made on the Rio Putumayo, S.E. Colombia, by the late Mr. Gustav Hopke a specimen of *Metopothrix aurantiacus* Scl. & Salv. (a bird hitherto unknown to me), I have made what I regard to be another important discovery, viz., that this bird is not a *Piprine* form, as was believed by its describers, but a *Dendrocolaptine*, closely allied to *Xenerpestes*, and agreeing with it in general characters of structure, viz., in having the same curved bill, *with prominent swollen tomia at the base of the upper mandible**, and also in exhibiting short stiff frontal feathers, though differing, of course, very much in the style of coloration.

I think that there can be no longer any question as to *Metopothrix* being removed from the *Pipridæ* and placed in the family *Dendrocolaptidæ* not far from *Xenerpestes*.

Schloss Berlepsch, November 1902.

XI.—Additional Remarks on certain Species of American Gallinæ. By W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT.

IN the July number of the 'Auk' (1902, pp. 309-311) Mr. J. A. Allen has criticized my identifications of certain recently described North-American Game-Birds (*cf.* Ibis, 1902, pp. 233-245).

* This character is to be found in nearly all *Dendrocolaptidæ*, being especially conspicuous in the species of the genus *Synallaxis*.

Firstly, as regards *Lagopus leucurus altipetens* Osgood, a supposed new subspecies from Colorado, shown to be identical with typical *L. leucurus* Swains. & Rich. Mr. Allen apparently admits the correctness of this identification; for he doubts whether birds from latitude 54° in the Rocky Mountains, the type-region of *L. leucurus*, are separable from the Colorado bird. This was the only point entered into in my notes. Mr. Allen, however, for some unaccountable reason, says that my "comparison of specimens from Colorado and the Cascade Mountains has no bearing on the case. The status of the Alaskan form, which is the question at issue, is not touched. . . . Mr. Osgood should probably have named the Alaskan form instead of that from Colorado." The fact remains that he did *not* do so; and Mr. Allen's half-page of criticism is therefore somewhat superfluous. It is almost unnecessary to add that the White-tailed Ptarmigan from Alaska, though only one female specimen in autumn plumage was available for comparison, was named without loss of time, and now appears as *L. l. peninsularis* (cf. Chapman, Bull. Am. Mus. N. H. xvi. p. 236). As a subspecies it will no doubt compare favourably with the various forms of *L. rupestris* recognised by American ornithologists.

As regards the discussion about the Canada Grouse and the Turkeys, it would be a waste of space to continue so unprofitable a controversy; but I should like to acknowledge Mr. Allen's apologies respecting Vicillot's name of the North-American Turkey (cf. Auk, 1902, p. 420), and to thank him for them.

In the October number of the 'Auk' (1902, pp. 336-391, pls. xiv. & xv.) Mr. E. W. Nelson has published a series of notes in which he attempts to justify his belief in the existence of other North-American and Mexican species of Game-Birds which I was unable to recognise as distinct. Having already given my reasons for proposing to suppress a number of these names, it is unnecessary to repeat them. There are, however, certain points in Mr. Nelson's paper which cannot be allowed to pass without remark.

†COLINUS VIRGINIANUS MACULATUS Nelson.

I have again looked over our series of *C. texanus*, and compared typical male examples from Western Texas with males from Tamaulipas obtained at Xicotencal, Sota la Marina, and Sierra Madre, above Ciudad Victoria, which must be typical of Mr. Nelson's *C. v. maculatus*, and again I fail to see any differences whatever between them. The male from Alta Mira (*cf.* Auk, xix. pl. xiv. fig. 6) is apparently an abnormally dark specimen, while the photograph of the typical *C. texanus* (fig. 5) must have been taken from an unusually light bird.

In the original description of *C. v. maculatus* (*cf.* Auk, xvi. p. 26) we read:—

“Lower neck and fore part of breast usually *plain dull rufous*; rest of lower parts, including lower tail-coverts, of the same colour, heavily marked on borders of feathers with black and white spots on sides of feathers near tips.”

In the description of plate xiv. we find the same specimen described as having:—

“Breast and rest of under parts to crissum *dark rufous*, spotted and mottled more or less sparingly with black and white.”

Which of these two descriptions are we to accept as correct?

It is evident from the “Remarks” added to the original description that Mr. Nelson's series of *C. v. maculatus* exhibits considerable variation *inter se*, for he writes:—
“The series at hand shews conclusively that *C. v. texanus* grades through the present bird directly into *O. (sic) graysoni*, thus reducing the latter to a subspecies of *O. (sic) virginianus*.” Mr. Nelson can hardly expect ornithologists to accept this extraordinary statement! *C. graysoni* belongs to an entirely different section of the genus.

†COLINUS GRAYSONI NIGRIPECTUS Nelson.

Mr. Nelson now finds that the type of this “subspecies” has nothing to do with *C. graysoni*, but differs from *C. pectoralis*, to which I referred it, in being decidedly larger.

Both Dr. Sharpe and I examined the typical specimen of *C. g. nigripectus* sent to the British Museum for comparison, and were unable to distinguish it from the type of *C. pectoralis*. Dr. Sharpe subsequently wrote to Mr. Nelson to that effect.

+ COLINUS MINOR Nelson.

In the original description of this species (*cf.* Auk, xviii. p. 47) we read :—

“Rest of head and *broad collar* around lower border of white throat-patch *black*.”

In ‘Auk,’ xix., in the description of plate xiv., we find the type has a

“*Narrow, poorly-defined black collar* below white throat-patch, &c.”

How are we to reconcile these two statements? Can the Quail change its collar?

+ CYRTONYX MONTEZUMÆ MEARNSEI Nelson.

As regards *C. m. mearnsi*, I may remark that, while admitting that the size of the white spots on the sides and flanks varies in different individuals of *C. montezumæ*, I would point out that this cannot be of any geographical significance, since a large-spotted male specimen from Puebla is quite indistinguishable from those obtained in South-western Texas and Arizona. Every intermediate stage connecting the largest- and smallest-spotted specimens can be found.

+ CYRTONYX MERRIAMI Nelson.

On p. 391 of Mr. Nelson’s paper, under the heading *Cyrtonyx merriami*, which, after reading his original description (*cf.* Auk, xv. p. 48), I placed as a synonym of *C. sallæi* (*cf.* Ibis, 1902, p. 242), I find the following :—

“The foregoing authoritative disposal of *C. merriami* made me almost fear that Mr. Grant held the power to make the ‘tiger change his spots.’ On examination of the type of *C. merriami*, however, I find that the color-characters between it, *C. montezumæ*, and *C. sallæi* are such that a photograph brings out some of the most salient differences.”

We never heard of the *tiger* changing his spots; but if we may believe what Mr. Nelson writes, his "Quail" is undoubtedly able to do so. In the original description of *C. merriami* we find the following:—

"On the posterior portion of the flanks the white spotting is replaced by spots of *buffy and chestnut*."

In the October number of the 'Auk,' on the sheet facing plate xv., we find the same specimen described:—

"Distribution of color on sides of breast and flanks similar to same in *C. montezumæ*, but ground-color paler grey and *white* spots smaller."

Which of these descriptions is correct? Obviously both cannot be, and, so far as one can judge from the indifferent photograph on plate xv., the type specimen agrees with the latter description and has the entire flanks spotted with white.

Turning again to the original description of *C. merriami*, we read that the light shaft-streaks on the back of the neck become more intensely coloured posteriorly, "until on the larger scapulars and tertiaries they are almost or quite *chestnut*"; that the tertiaries are marked with *oblong black spots*, more like bars; and that the chestnut area on the breast and belly is of a *lighter* shade than in *C. montezumæ*. Any "competent ornithologist" reading the above, and bearing in mind the *buff* and *chestnut spotting* on the flanks, must be aware that the type of *C. merriami* should not have been compared with *C. montezumæ* but with *C. sallæi*, which possesses all these characteristics.

Now it will be seen that the type shown in the photograph is a very different bird, apparently a specimen of *C. montezumæ*!

The fact that in the type of *C. merriami* the black on the throat joins the chestnut on the breast without the intervention of a white collar is probably a mere individual character, and of little importance as specific or sub-specific. It may even be caused by the "make-up" of the skin, for the white collar in *C. sallæi* is at best very narrow. The British Museum possesses two male specimens of *C. texanus*, which are unquestionably merely individual

varieties, with the chin and middle of the throat black, as in the Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), instead of pure white. The knowledge that such individual variation may and does occur should make writers cautious in accepting such a character as of any specific value.

I must mention that the bird figured by Mr. Nelson as *C. sallæi* does not appear to be of that species, but that the photograph does not shew up the characters very clearly.

These are a few instances of the inaccuracy of Mr. Nelson's descriptions; and it is evident that his "intimate knowledge of the topography and geographic distribution" does not necessarily establish his claims as an ornithologist.

I may add that, for those who have not had the advantage of twelve years' travel in Mexico, an exceptionally good atlas, with large maps of each State, is available, viz. Cuba's 'Atlas Geografico y Estadistico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos' (Mexico, 1886).

XII.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

1. 'Annals of Scottish Natural History.'

[The Annals of Scottish Natural History. No. 43, July 1902, and No. 44, October 1902.]

Mr. T. G. Laidlaw's valuable "Report on the Movements and Occurrence of Birds in Scotland during 1901" is continued in the July number and concluded in that of October. The same remark applies to Mr. Harvie-Brown's contribution to the avifauna of the Outer Hebrides, with the exception that the species treated by him reach no further than the Rallidae, so that we must wait until January for the conclusion of this paper. Every student of the distribution of birds in North Britain will read these articles with attention, but the principal rarities have been already recorded; as regards the minor notices, there are none which call for special remark in these pages.

II. S.